

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 03068 282151Z

63

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 H-02 TRSE-00 /023 W
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R 282047Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 611

INFO AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

UNCLAS OTTAWA 3068

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTIO, ELTN, CA

SUBJ: ALASKA HIGHWAY: HAINES CUTOFF

REF: (A) STATE 181296; (B) VANCOUVER 759

1. UPON RECEIPT REFTEL A, ECON COUNSELOR CONTACTED NUTT (DIRECTOR GENERAL, WESTERN HEMISPHERE BUREAU, EXTAFF), INFORMED HIM OF CONTENT FHWA MESSAGE, AND REQUESTED DEFINITIVE ADVICE ON CANADIAN POSITION PRIOR TO JULY 28.

2. ON MORNING OF JULY 28, WHITTLETON (U.S.A. DIVISION, EXTAFF) TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT HE COULD NOT YET GIVE DEFINITE ANSWER. BEST HE COULD SAY WAS THAT GOC HAD RECEIVED APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE FROM B.C. GOVERNMENT FOR RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT BUT THAT APPROVAL WAS SUBJECT TO TWO CONDITIONS INVOLVING FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS (SEE PARA 2 REFTEL B) THAT WOULD REQUIRE SOME NEGOTIATION WITH PROVINCE. WHITTLETON ESTIMATED IT WOULD REQUIRE "UP TO A MONTH" TO RESOLVE THESE PROBLEMS.

3. IN LIGHT REPORT REFTEL B THAT GOC/GBC AGREEMENT MAY TAKE WEEKS OR MONTHS, ECON COUNSELOR PRESSED WHITTLETON ON WHETHER HIS ESTIMATE OF "UP TO A MONTH" WAS REALISTIC. WHITTLETON SAID DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OFFICIALS DO NOT SEE MAJOR PROBLEM AND THINK THINGS CAN BE WORKED OUT "IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS." HE IS THEREFORE "HOPEFUL" THAT HIS ESTIMATE WILL PROVE REALISTIC.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 03068 282151Z

4. SUBSEQUENTLY, ECON COUNSELOR TALKED WITH BINKS AT PUBLIC WORKS WHO CONFIRMED THAT HE THOUGHT PROBLEMS COULD BE RESOLVED IN SHORT ORDER "UNLESS QUESTIONS HAVE TO BE PUT TO MINISTERS" IN WHICH CASE IT MIGHT TAKE A BIT LONGER. HE SAID GOC IS STILL AWAITING RECEIPT OF LETTER FROM GBC REFERRED TO IN PARA 4 OF REFTEL B. WHEN THIS IS RECEIVED, HE WILL BE IN BETTER POSITION TO MAKE A JUDGEMENT. BINKS PROMISED TO KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS.
ENDERS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, HIGHWAYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OTTAWA03068
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760292-0739
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760713/aaaaallr.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 181296, 76 VANCOUVER 759
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hackerp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAR 2004 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2005 by hackerp0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALASKA HIGHWAY: HAINES CUTOFF
TAGS: BTIO, ELTN, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006